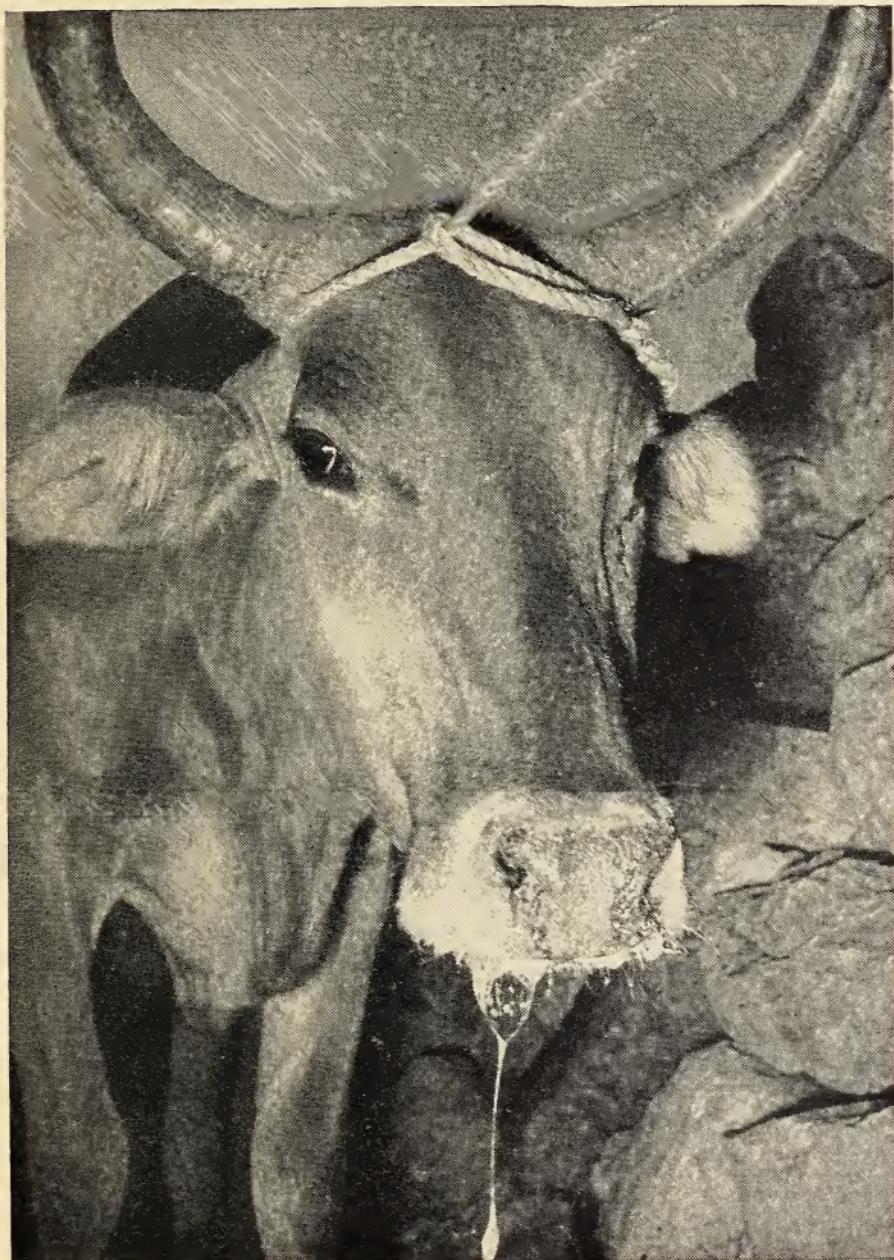


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Help Protect the United States from Foot-and-Mouth Disease



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Foot-and-Mouth Disease

What It Is

Foot-and-mouth disease is an extremely contagious disease of cattle, sheep, goats, swine, and other cloven-hoofed animals. It causes blisters and sores on membranes of the mouth and tongue, and on the skin around and between the divided hoofs. It may also affect the udders and teats of milk-producing animals and the snouts of hogs.

Its Effects

Death losses are generally low—seldom more than 5 percent in adult animals, though higher in calves and other young stock. The disease is feared most because it spreads so rapidly and because it so often leaves its victims thin and otherwise in impaired condition for meat or milk production. Another common effect of the disease is to reduce the value of animals for breeding purposes.

Where It Is

Foot-and-mouth disease has long been established in most countries of Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America. The United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand are the principal large areas that have kept the infection out of their livestock. The United States has had several outbreaks but has eradicated them all. This country is now cooperating with Mexico in suppressing the serious outbreak that appeared there in 1946 and has since spread to parts of 16 Mexican States. Until completely stamped out, it is a serious danger to the livestock industries and food resources of both countries.

Control and Suppression

Experience and scientific study have shown that the surest and quickest way to stamp out the disease is to kill and bury affected and exposed herds and to disinfect the premises they occupied. This method has long been used with success in the United States. It was tried in Mexico for almost a year, during which nearly a million animals were destroyed. At the end of that time the United States found it necessary to consent to Mexico's request for a control program that would have a less severe effect on her agriculture and other industries.

The present program involves chiefly inspection, quarantine, disinfection, vaccination, and a limited amount of slaughter to keep the infection from spreading beyond the limits of the main affected area in central Mexico, and to bring about eventual eradication of the disease.

Enforcement of Quarantine

Quarantine restrictions are based on both scientific knowledge and practical experience with the disease. The regulations apply to live animals, fresh meat, persons, vehicles, aircraft, vessels, straw, manure, and other possible carriers of infective virus. The movement of some commodities, such as susceptible live animals and fresh meat, from infected to clean areas is prohibited entirely. Certain others, if properly disinfected, are allowed to pass quarantine lines.

Vaccination

The purpose of vaccinating animals against foot-and-mouth disease is to make them resistant to it. The vaccine is administered to susceptible animals while they are still healthy. Vaccines now available provide protection for several months. Vaccines that give longer protection are being sought.

In the campaign, in Mexico, vaccines are being administered first to animals near the northern and southern quarantine lines, particularly in the protective zones just

inside those lines. In cases where centers of infection appear, the herds involved are slaughtered and buried and all susceptible animals in the surrounding area are vaccinated, thereby encircling the place of infection with immune animals.

Indemnity for Losses

Under the present program for controlling the disease in Mexico, the slaughter of infected and exposed herds is limited mainly to those discovered in the protective zones near the northern and southern quarantine lines, or in clean areas beyond those lines. In such cases the premises are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after the herds have been killed and buried.

The plan of operation provides for fair indemnity payments for animals and other property destroyed under official supervision. Owners of oxen slaughtered because of foot-and-mouth disease are assisted in obtaining mules, which are not susceptible to this infection. This substitution, and also the use of tractors in some cases, helps maintain and develop Mexico's agricultural production.

Public Cooperation

Persons who suspect the presence of foot-and-mouth disease in the United States should report it immediately to the nearest State livestock sanitary official, United States Bureau of Animal Industry inspector, or any veterinarian. Prompt reporting is important in preventing the spread of the disease. And because it is so contagious, persons not participating in eradication work in Mexico or elsewhere should not visit infected premises or those suspected of being infected. This caution applies particularly to farmers, who might carry the disease to *their own livestock*. Motorists, tourists, and others who travel in areas where the disease exists are urged to cooperate promptly and fully with the authorities in measures necessary for its successful control and suppression.

Effect of the Disease on Man

The virus of foot-and-mouth disease very rarely affects human beings. Their susceptibility is slight; and effects of the disease on man are generally mild. Thus the same disease that is so serious in livestock is of very slight importance from a human-health standpoint.

This pamphlet is issued for the information of tourists, motorists, and other persons who may visit areas of Mexico where the livestock plague known as foot-and-mouth disease, or aphthous fever, exists. In Mexico the disease is called fiebre aftosa.

The infection is the cause of great loss to agriculture and industry in all countries of the world where the disease has become established. Great care is necessary to keep it out of the United States. This country is cooperating with Mexico in the control and suppression of the infection.

Please cooperate fully in disinfection procedures and other measures for preventing the spread of the disease within Mexico or from that country to the United States.

Further information may be obtained from the United States Bureau of Animal Industry, Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

